



Tool Kit for Academic Library Change Communications:

A Literature-Based, Time-Tested Protocol
of Best Practices for Library Change

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What is **Change Communication** in Academic Libraries?

- Changes in Academic Libraries are always complex, even the smallest changes can be fraught with unexpected complications: could be policy, operations, technology, space? Or a combination of all four?
- Have an impact on a diverse/complex set of stakeholders --> in addition to impact on Library employees, also impact on faculty, staff and students who have long established “user” practices
- Major pitfalls include: lack of internal buy-in, inadequate administrative leadership, ineffective cross-functional collaboration, lack of accountability

([SnapComms, 2022](#))

Bridges' Transition Curve

The core element of the Transition Model by change consultant William Bridges is that it focuses on transition, not change



Typical reactions: Its difficult; Process is cumbersome; it works here;

Typical outputs: Drop in output, lots of resistance, Rumors...

Suggestions:

- Be present, visible and accessible
- Communicate and clear the doubts of what is not changing
- Explain why this transformation and WIIFM
- Be thoughtful of the teams feelings

Typical reactions: I am trying... its taking time to complete...

Typical outputs: Apprehension, Absenteeism, Avoidance

Suggestions:

- Communicate & Clarify
- Training & Coaching - (OJT-on the job)
- Motivate
- Set short term goals and make it easy and discernable
- Encourage innovation
- Award early bird adoption

Typical reactions: I am learning... Customers are happy...

Typical outputs: New Attitudes; New positive behaviors

Suggestions:

- Continue to communicate
- Create safe environment for taking risk
- Appreciate
- Celebrate success

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“Packaging” Change: Thinking in terms of meeting challenges and growth, **not** disruption and change

According to SnapComms, the key to successful organizational change is:

1. Make sure that systems and processes are sound, functional and fully tested
2. Support Employee change
3. Support End-user change
4. How do we do this? Lots of presentations on "how we did it good", but we have traced what is in common from those reports and come up with a tool kit that can be applied to any size change in any size institution

([SnapComms, 2022](#))





Guiding principle:
Kotter's Eight Steps of Change Communication

1. Act with Urgency
2. Develop a Guiding Coalition
3. Develop a Change Vision
4. Communicate the Vision
5. Empower Action
6. Generate Short-term Wins
7. Don't let up
8. Make change stick

([Wheeler & Holmes, 2017](#))

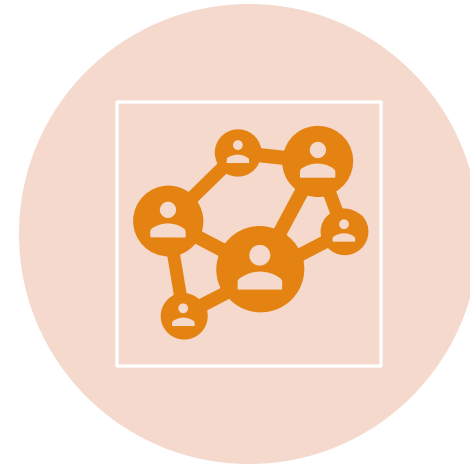
Kotter's principles of change are very broad -->

Question: How can they be operationalized?

Considering the complexities of Change: Communication as Organizational Change Driver: Toolkit philosophy



CRITICAL TO SHIFT FOCUS OF COMMUNICATION
NOT ON SERIAL CHANGES BUT ON
ORGANIZATIONAL INNOVATION



IMPORTANT TO SEE THE CULTURE OF
INNOVATION FOSTERING, GENERATING CHANGE
RATHER THAN ONE OR MORE INDIVIDUALS
FORCING THE CHANGES TO HAPPEN

First and Second Order Changes

Culture of Innovation: First order change is not a series of individual events, but is embedded in the culture of the organization, iterative and ongoing

Vision-driven: Characterized by ongoing adjustments to processes and organizational systems rather than by disruption and discontinuity

Formal Communication for first order change is a blend of three forces



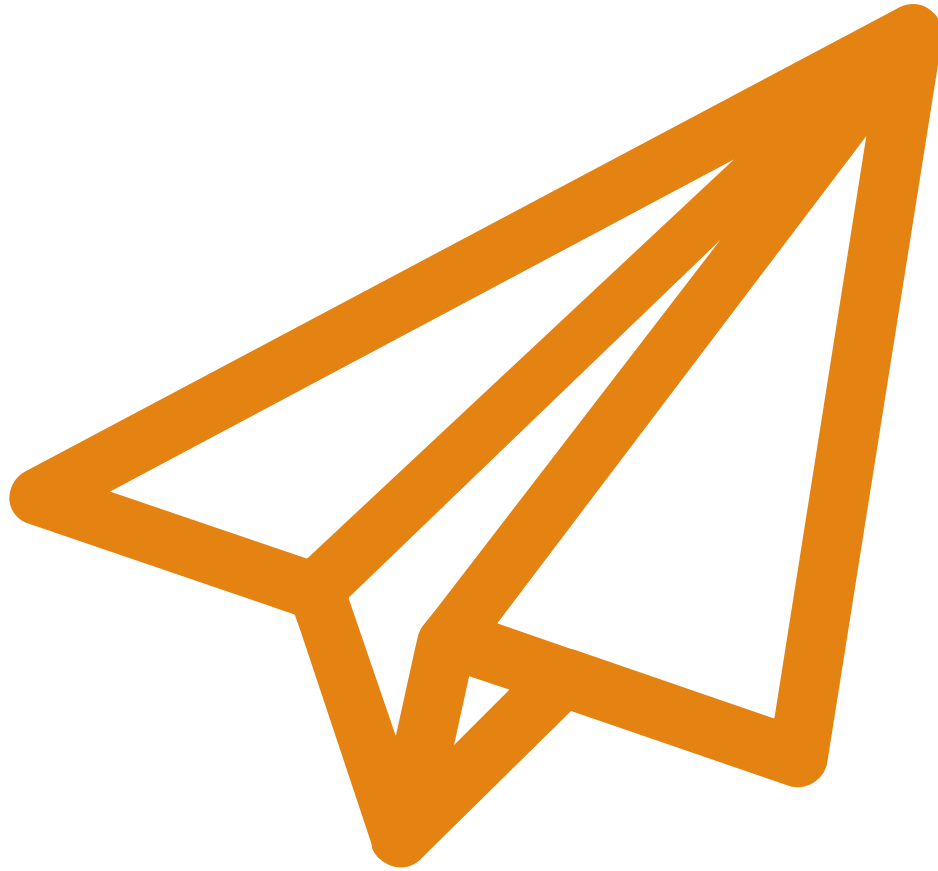
Push



Pull



Interactive



“Push” Communication: most familiar with this

- Outward directed communication from agent to recipients
- Newsletters, e-mails

“Pull”
communication
is the listening
function

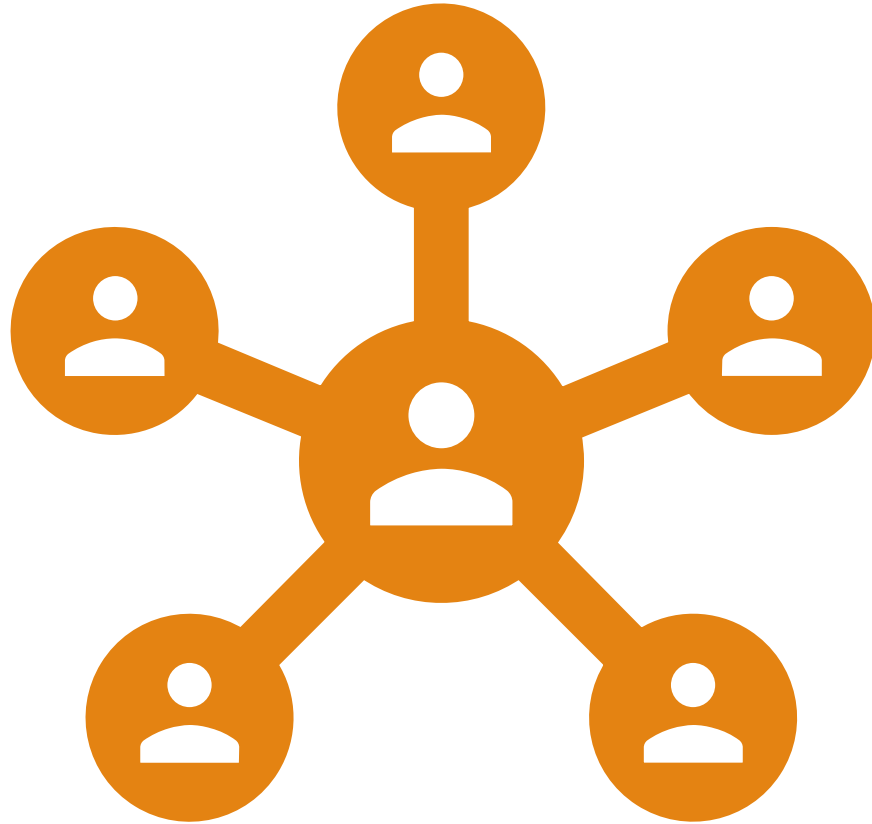
FOCUS GROUPS,
TOWNHALLS





“Interactive” Communication

MEETINGS, BRAINSTORMING SESSIONS, INTERDEPARTMENTAL AND INFORMAL DIALOG



First Order Change is
a combination of
Push, Pull and
Interactive
Communication
Model



But how we
make these
models
actionable?

The Context

MacEwan University Library
is moving to a new Library
Services Platform (LSP)

...How do we
effectively
communicate
this change
to our staff,
students, and
faculty?

MacEwan Library Change Communication Action Group Showcases Organizational Innovation

The primary goal of the LSP Project Communication Working Group is to ensure effective communication and timely engagement with faculty, students, and Library staff about the Library Service Platform implementation project.

Objectives:

1. To identify internal Library and external faculty communication needs and gaps with regard to the transition to the new LSP
2. To develop a communication strategy that will ensure effective communication among and to various LSP stakeholders.
3. To design and implement timely and regular publicity and promotion materials for MacEwan's broader community
4. To monitor communication effectiveness
5. Develop mechanisms for stakeholder feedback about the LSP transition process and operations
6. To provide regular progress reports to Library staff
7. To provide updates on the project's progress to the MacEwan community
8. To utilize a variety of communication approaches (social media, focus groups, audiovisual promotional materials, contests) to engage and onboard MacEwan community members

**Develop the
guiding coalition**

Act with urgency

**Develop a change
vision**

**Communicate the
vision**

Empower action

**Generate short-
term wins**

Don't let up

Make change stick



Toolkit Applications



Collections budget restructuring



Changes to library service provision



Launching a new strategic plan



New Library Services Platform



Major library renovations



Click [here](#) for sources & further reading!

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Questions? Comments?
